

Brethren Evangelist

"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life."—Jesus

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Superstition and Christianity

The great New York dailies have fallen into the fashion, we trust that it is even more than a mere fashion, or fad, of discussing profound religious questions, for the most part such as concern the great problems revolving around the central idea of Christianity. Letters from contributors are published in connection with these discussions, representing almost every shade of belief or unbelief, and sometimes there are passages of great interest. That a profound ignorance of the fundamental principles of religion, and of Christianity, is at the root of much of this discussion can readily be seen, but that is no great wonder since a profound ignorance of these principles, on their technical or theoretical side, is not confined to irreligious people. There are plenty of most excellent Christian people, church members and church goers, who are unable apparently to give any well connected, orderly and intelligible statement of the principles of Christianity. Let a stranger ask them for an explanation of their religion, and they will generally give him two or three of the external and periodical ceremonies of the church. They will tell him, for example, that "we baptize by Trine Immersion, observe the Lord's Supper, Feet-washing, the salutation, non-resistance, and a few other things." The "few other things" being obviously secondary and indifferent compared with the things mentioned, some of which are practiced once in a lifetime, and others once or twice a year. Still there is a better side to the picture. More people are beginning to find out that Christianity is a *life, a daily, hourly life*; that it is *holiness*; that it is "*walking with God*," that it is based upon the *golden rule* on its manward side, on *faith in God* on its Godward side; that this faith is not primarily belief in a doctrine, but a *trusting in the Father*, precisely as a little child trusts in father and mother; that so fundamental, so permeating is this religion that it brings, and must bring, "every thought in subjection to the obedience of Christ." This searching, thorough, real Christianity is the difficult thing with men and women. All the agony, all the conflict, all the cross, is there. It is so infinitely easier to center religion in a few ex-

ternal rites than to center it in the *daily life*, and in the consecrated temple of the soul. The most difficult, the most tragical, the most revolutionary, the most momentous thing in all human experiences is to "present your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable." This act, which in its ultimate involves infinite bliss, in its beginnings and progress involves infinite pain, and men and women do not like pain. It requires the highest order of courage, of heroism, and all are not heroes. Being a Christian involves a willingness to die to be a Christian,—no, this falls far short; it involves dying. Paul said he "died daily." Few people comparatively are willing to die once in a lifetime, even to be saved. Were it not that God pities the weak, how could there be hope for poor pusillanimous humanity? "He remembereth that our frame is dust."

Creeds, theories, alledged "systems" of theology, much that we hear from the pulpit and much that we read in the religious press, may be open to the charge of superstition, but a godly, holy, loving, helpful life is not superstition, and no one, not even the scoffer, ever says that it is. It is not the pure gold that we discount, but merely the alloys, or the semblances, of gold. He who loves his neighbor as himself and as Jesus loved him is twenty-four carats fine, and will never fall below par until God goes into bankruptcy. The world and the devil may slander him, but it makes no difference to the real article what you say about him, not the slightest. From behind and beneath all ephemeral clouds his "judgment shall break forth as noonday, and his righteousness as the light."

Trust in God

Trust in God for yourself and your children. If you have wealth, it will fly away; if you have health, it will fail; if you have time, it will come to an end; if you have talent, it will soon be nothing; if you have anything belonging to the world, it will perish; but if you trust in God, a thousand, a million years from now you will know it, and all the universe will know it. There is no other anchor, no other roof, no other refuge like that. There is no other provision that you can make for your children which will compare with it.